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President: Mr. Schulz (Vice-President) ..... (Germany)
later: Mr. Shava ..... (Zimbabwe)

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In the absence of Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Mr. Schulz (Germany), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*) (E/2017/33, E/2017/64, E/2017/66, E/2017/69 and E/2017/72)

(c) Thematic discussion (E/2017/64 and E/2017/69)

Theme: "Reducing multidimensional poverty in the Sustainable Development Goals era"

1. **Mr. Jahan** (Director of the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), moderator, said that the objectives of the thematic discussion were to examine multidimensional poverty in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and current poverty reduction approaches; explore how the Goals and national poverty reduction strategies could be used to monitor progress and identify gaps; and share innovative initiatives from around the world.

2. While the notion of multidimensional poverty was well established, there was less clarity about the measures and policies needed to address it. With regard to the nature of multidimensional poverty, there were certain important questions to address, such as what constituted deprivation and whether some kinds were worse than others. The answers were context-specific and depended on the approaches of the individuals and communities concerned, although there were certain fundamental issues that were universal.

3. Noting that there were different ways to measure multidimensional poverty, he said that UNDP and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative had started measuring multidimensional poverty using the Multidimensional Poverty Index in 2010. The Initiative had also begun to make available disaggregated data and conduct research into poverty among children.

4. There were a number of policy issues to consider, such as whether the international community should try to reduce multidimensional poverty through the macroeconomic framework only or in combination with targeted interventions. There was also a need to consider how best to combine economic and social policies, in particular in the context of the Goals.

5. **Mr. Ravallion** (Professor of Economics at Georgetown University), panellist, accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that poverty was essentially a question of human welfare. While real income and access to commodities were crucial, welfare also included access to non-market goods such as health care and education. Household statistics revealed little about intra-household distribution. In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, the majority of undernourished women and children did not belong to households identified as "poor" by standard measures. Standard poverty measures should, therefore, be supplemented by other data.

6. The theoretical ideal was to create a standard poverty measure that used an equivalent income to reflect a wide range of non-income dimensions of welfare. The concept of an equivalent income had existed for some 70 years and was a feasible way of measuring poverty, but it was not in widespread use. Instead, poverty tended to be measured in narrow ways that did not incorporate non-income dimensions.

7. There were two approaches to measuring poverty: the dashboard approach and the composite index approach. The former consisted of multiple indices covering not only income but also other poverty measures such as mortality and schooling rates. The Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals were examples of such approaches. Conversely, the latter approach was a one-dimensional measure that aggregated information into a single index. The two most well-known examples were the Human Development Index and the Multidimensional Poverty Index.

8. The Human Development Index was a composite index of mean income, life expectancy and schooling. The three core dimensions were scaled and the Index was obtained by taking the equally weighted geometric mean of the three. One of the issues with the Index was that it implicitly attached a monetary value to an extra year of life, which was troubling from an ethical point of view. The implied value of an extra year of life varied from just $0.51 per year in Zimbabwe to $9,000 per year in rich countries.

9. The Multidimensional Poverty Index consisted of two variables for health, two for education and six for living standards. Poverty was measured separately in each of the 10 dimensions. The aggregate poverty measures for each of the three main headings were then weighted equally to form the Index. A household was identified as poor if it was deprived across at least 30 per cent of the indicators.

10. One of the issues with the Multidimensional Poverty Index was that it required a survey that covered all the dimensions for each sampled household. As a result, the list of variables was determined by the surveys available, instead of people's actual concerns. That was not the case with

dashboard indices, which used the best available data source for each indicator.

11. Another serious issue was that the Index did not take into account prices. While there was some truth to the claim that markets were distorted, prices were still important for welfare-consistent aggregation. Poverty measures must reflect the difficult trade-offs that poor people faced daily, which were determined by prices. Aggregation without prices could not yield poverty measures that were consistent with the welfare of individuals living at the poverty line.

12. Economists had long resisted asking people directly about their own welfare and what mattered to them, looking instead at objective indicators such as consumption. However, there was increasing interest in using subjective welfare data to calibrate composite indices. The new approach had resulted in some interesting discoveries, but it also came with its own problems, such as the heterogeneity of the scales used. For instance, people's concept of what it meant to be happy varied depending on where they lived and how much of the world they had seen.

13. While the international community must acknowledge that poverty was not just about low income, there was also a risk in setting a large number of goals for every poverty and human development policy. If every policy was expected to achieve every goal, all policies would be judged failures. There were inevitable trade-offs and it must be accepted that some policies were better at achieving particular goals.

14. A single composite index was rarely useful for policymaking as policy decisions tended to concern the components of an index. Instead, it was more interesting to see how a country performed in a particular area relative to other countries. For that, disaggregated data were more useful. Some indices, such as the Multidimensional Poverty Index, could be readily unpacked, but it was questionable what policy purpose was served by aggregating them in the first place.

15. The international community needed multiple indices to monitor poverty and inform policymaking. In that connection, dashboard indices were crucial. While composite indices guaranteed that important dimensions of welfare were not ignored, they could also be used to hide poor performance in key dimensions. The international community must focus its efforts on developing the best possible distinct measures of the various dimensions of poverty deemed relevant to a given setting.

16. **Mr. Jahan** (Director of the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that composite indices and dashboard indices had differing objectives and served different purposes. It would be interesting to discuss whether aggregation should be done arithmetically or geometrically.

17. **Ms. Jallow-Tambajang** (Vice-President and Minister of Women's Affairs of the Gambia), panellist, said that a lack of income, inadequate access to social services, a lack of freedom and the marginalization of women and young people were all indicators of poverty. Owing to the multidimensional nature of poverty, it was important to focus on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

18. Following a change of government in December 2016 after 22 years of dictatorship, the Gambia had adopted a people-centred reform agenda. The set of constitutional, legal, economic and social reforms were intended to put Gambians at the centre of development and ensure that no one was left behind, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. After years of division, the country needed social cohesion. A truth and reconciliation commission was in the process of being established. Many people had suffered during the dictatorship and it was extremely important to reconcile the country.

19. To improve the economic situation, her Government had mobilized strategic resources from the United Nations, the European Union, the World Bank and other donors and was working to stabilize the macroeconomic framework. The aim was to go beyond inclusive growth by empowering the people and tapping the talents of the Gambian diaspora. With the support of the United Nations, her Government had launched a project to encourage Gambians living abroad to return and help rebuild the country. A diaspora think tank had also been set up to help in the development of a national plan.

20. The Government intended to modernize the agricultural sector and promote value-added agriculture. It would also promote entrepreneurship with a view to helping more Gambians to participate in development. In that connection, it was important to engage the private sector, civil society, women and young people. The Government would offer incentives to productive sectors of the economy and relax legislation. It was also committed to policy reform with a view to ensuring a focus on people-centred development and involving all stakeholders in the implementation of policies.

21. **Mr. Brodjonegoro** (Minister of National Development Planning of Indonesia), panellist, accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that poverty prevalence in Indonesia had decreased from 28.32 per cent in 2006 to 8.80 per cent in 2015, while the proportion of the population below the poverty line had dropped from 17.75 per cent in 2006 to 10.70 per cent in 2016. The poverty gap index and the poverty severity index had also declined. Child poverty rates were falling and stood at 13.31 per cent in 2016.

22. The pace of progress had slowed over the past three years, however. Poverty was spread unevenly throughout the archipelago and was more prevalent in rural areas. The country was also experiencing persistent inequality. At the heart of the problem was chronic poverty, which was multidimensional in nature and characterized by limited access to basic services, poor living standards and the inability to access financial services, which could trap the poor in a cycle of intergenerational poverty.

23. While maternal mortality rates had dropped from 346 per 100,000 live births in 2010 to 305 in 2016, the country was a long way from meeting the target of fewer than 70 established under Sustainable Development Goal 3. Poor access to health care and social and cultural factors, such as early marriage, all contributed to the problem. Mortality rates for infants and children under 5 years of age had decreased since 1991, but progress had been stagnant since 2007.

24. Although the Government was committed to providing nine years of education for every child, data showed that one third of school-age children did not receive that. Millions of Indonesians, in particular those from low-income and rural households, did not have identity documents, which hampered their ability to access basic services, including education, and made it difficult for the Government to target social and economic programmes effectively.

25. More needed to be done to improve access to clean water and sanitation. At present 62 per cent of the population had access to clean water while 54 per cent had access to sanitation, against the target of 100 per cent by 2019. Access was a particular problem for poor and vulnerable groups.

26. Eliminating multidimensional poverty required strategic and integrated intervention. The Government's efforts were focused on enhancing social protection programmes, improving basic services and strengthening the livelihoods of people living in poverty. It was working to improve the multidimensional assets of the poor, including human capital, social cohesion, financial assets and basic infrastructure.

27. Specifically, the Government was expanding the national health insurance system; providing conditional cash transfers to very poor households; streamlining the process for acquiring identity documents; improving access to justice, in particular for women; developing a unified database to accelerate poverty reduction; improving access to electricity; enhancing institutional frameworks to enable better horizontal and vertical coordination; and investing in employment, business and skills development opportunities at the local level. While such programmes would go a long way towards addressing the challenge of multidimensional poverty, there was a need to further improve integrated data management, refine poverty allocation programmes, enhance the effectiveness of government poverty reduction efforts, strengthen institutional frameworks and empower poor people.

28. The Sustainable Development Goals should serve as a catalyst for international cooperation. The high-level political forum on sustainable development and the voluntary national review could help to identify implementation gaps and opportunities for international cooperation, including developing integrated social protection databases and programmes and promoting financial inclusion.

29. **Mr. Barraza** (Minister for Social Development of Chile), panellist, said that since the country's return to democracy, Chile had implemented a whole series of policies that had helped it to reduce poverty significantly, develop a rights-based social protection system and achieve middle-income country status. His Government had set itself ambitious objectives and had adopted a new paradigm with a view to tackling poverty and inequality. The new paradigm recognized that poverty was not merely a question of lack of income but a much more complex phenomenon. Poverty affected many dimensions of welfare, including education, health, employment, social security and housing.

30. Chile had developed its own multidimensional poverty index with assistance from the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, a panel of national experts and an inter-institutional round table. In addition, sophisticated income-based poverty measures had been introduced and consumer patterns had been investigated. Income-based poverty measures indicated that 0.3 per cent of Chileans lived below the global poverty line. According to national methodology, income-based poverty stood at 11.7 per

cent while multidimensional poverty stood at 20.9 per cent.

31. In order to achieve inclusive and sustainable development, his Government had enacted tax reforms that were expected to generate additional tax revenue equal to 3 per cent of gross domestic product. It was also carrying out structural reforms of the education system, which were intended to increase access to free and high-quality education up to the tertiary level, eliminate discriminatory practices and strengthen the role of teachers. The education reforms would transform education from a consumer good to a social right and a springboard for development.

32. The Government had strengthened the public health system with a major investment and infrastructure programme. More doctors and specialists had been trained and hired, and new programmes had been implemented to promote dental health and healthy lifestyles. A growing number of conditions were covered by the public health system, including rare and chronic diseases. The Government was addressing obesity, which affected 10 per cent of children under 5 years of age, by introducing laws regulating the advertising and labelling of high-calorie food.

33. Labour reforms had been enacted to modernize working conditions and strengthen collective rights with a view to achieving the International Labour Organization's standards for decent work. His Government was working to increase the participation of women, young people and persons with disabilities in the labour market through capacity-building and quota systems. The Government had also extended its subsidy scheme for families, which now covered 60 per cent of the most vulnerable households.

34. A draft bill on pension reform had been put forward that would increase pensions significantly and improve social security. The bill proposed the creation of a collective solidarity account, funded by a 5 per cent rise in contributions from employers. In addition, regulatory measures were being introduced to improve the transparency, fairness and efficiency of the pension system.

35. His Government was striving to ensure that all Chileans had access to housing. It had provided housing subsidies to more than 700,000 families and was building additional high-quality and accessible subsidized housing in cities with the worst shortages. It had introduced rural adaptation programmes and neighbourhood regeneration schemes, with a strong emphasis on citizen participation. It was also improving the quality of social housing. New housing schemes were required to be energy-efficient and include communal areas such as gardens.

36. Lastly, he highlighted a programme, "Chile crece contigo", which was intended to not only combat poverty but also level the playing field for all children. It sought to promote the intellectual, social and emotional development of children and support mothers and pregnant women. The programme was evidence of the country's recognition that poverty was multidimensional and that efforts to combat it must be proactive, rather than retroactive.

37. **Mr. Hernández Alcerro** (Coordinating Minister of the Cabinet of Government of Honduras), panellist, accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was the most ambitious development instrument in history, as it transcended the traditional division between developed and developing countries by promoting a comprehensive and inclusive approach to sustainable development.

38. Poverty, in particular extreme poverty, affected all countries, regardless of their level of development, and was broadly recognized as the main obstacle to democratic governance and sustainable socioeconomic development. Its elimination was therefore a universal imperative and a key objective of government agendas. Understanding poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon was critical for identifying its various manifestations and developing potential solutions. The recognition by the European Union of the economic, social, environmental, cultural and political aspects of poverty in its new Consensus on Development represented an important step in that regard.

39. Measurements of poverty based on national or family income or per capita gross domestic product reduced explanations of poverty or the level of development of a country or region to a single variable and should therefore be used in conjunction with multidimensional measurements. For instance, as part of his country's efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, the President of Honduras had introduced a national multidimensional poverty index as a complement to income-based measures, an initiative that had also been undertaken by a number of other Latin American countries. Such national multidimensional measures were important for improving analysis and evaluation of public policies, enhancing their efficiency and effectiveness, and targeting their design, implementation and review on the basis of social gaps among age groups and regional groups. In addition, the global Multidimensional Poverty Index enabled a comparison of poverty levels among different countries

and ensured a more effective allocation of resources at the international level for the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal 1 and Target 1.2. In that connection, the Secretary-General had emphasized in his related report (E/2017/69) that, despite the unique challenges faced by each country, common areas of concern such as education, health and food security could serve as the basis for establishing a global mechanism for measuring multidimensional poverty.

40. The current classification of countries by income did not allow for the appropriately targeted allocation of resources for development cooperation and therefore undermined the effectiveness of development assistance. Under the current system, for example, middle-income countries were treated in the same way as the more developed countries, despite the significant development challenges they faced. In that connection, in its Consensus on Development, the European Union had recognized the need to address the persistent poverty, inequality and vulnerability faced by middle-income countries, taking into account the particular circumstances of each country, regardless of its category. The integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda would require the international community to move beyond traditional methods of measuring development, classifying countries and allocating resources for international cooperation.

41. **Mr. Hernández Licona** (Observer for Mexico) said that Mexico had derived significant benefits from using a composite index that comprised equally-weighted variables selected using a rights-based approach. For example, the public policy initiatives undertaken by his Government addressed the multiple dimensions of poverty more effectively than those developed using income-based measures. In addition, the use of a single combined index, rather than several disparate indicators, had led to better coordination among different ministries and levels of government in addressing poverty, a benefit that had also been observed in other countries that used composite indices, including Chile, Colombia and Honduras. Hence, despite the technical and methodological challenges posed by such indices, they could prove useful in assisting Member States in their efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in an integrated manner.

42. **Ms. Edillon** (Observer for the Philippines) asked Mr. Brodjonegoro how the near poor were defined in the context of his Government's conditional cash transfer programme and how politicians in his country had been convinced to include them, as her Government was considering expanding its own conditional cash transfer programme to include the near poor.

43. **Mr. Brodjonegoro** (Minister of National Development Planning of Indonesia) said that his Government defined the near poor as those living on an income of up to 1.2 times the poverty line. While priority was currently given to the poor and extreme poor, the conditional cash transfer programme would be expanded in the future to include the near poor. The inclusion of the near poor had been proposed by members of his country's parliament as a way of ensuring that persons in that category did not fall back into poverty.

44. **Mr. Ravallion** (Professor of Economics at Georgetown University) said that he questioned whether composite indices were the right tools for addressing the coordination challenges that Governments faced, as all one-dimensional measures were ultimately reductive and hence detrimental to policymaking. To be effective, composite indices must be based on data that reflected the priorities of the people in the countries concerned. Subjective welfare data was thus essential for assigning appropriate weight to the variables that comprised such indices and for eschewing the arbitrariness and elitism that often characterized the weights set by Governments.

45. **Ms. Jallow-Tambajang** (Vice-President and Minister of Women's Affairs of the Gambia) said that the Sustainable Development Goals provided a critical opportunity to put an end to poverty. Efforts must be made to capitalize on global interconnectivity in order to continue to share experiences and best practices for advancing the social development agenda. With support from the Council, donors and partner countries, the Gambia looked forward to preparing its voluntary national review reflecting the reality of the Gambian people for submission by 2018. She hoped that, one day, the inalienable right of all people to economic prosperity and equal opportunities would be realized so that topics other than poverty could be given greater consideration in discussions related to development.

46. **Mr. Barraza** (Minister for Social Development of Chile) said that, in his country, multidimensional poverty measures had strengthened policymaking and intersectoral collaboration. For example, multidimensional data had been instrumental in the recent design of an intersectoral plan aimed at promoting the development of the Araucanía region in Chile. His Government's rights-based approach to measuring poverty had allowed it to assess the population's standard of living more effectively and to enact policies that had significantly reduced poverty

and extreme poverty. Those policies had not led to uniform improvement in the standard of living of all segments of the population, however. As multidimensional poverty measures comprised qualitative as well as quantitative indicators, they were particularly important for assessing welfare in countries in which the legitimacy of democracy and institutions was under threat and in which there was no linkage between the concept of citizenship and the right to a decent standard of living. Lastly, multidimensional measures had allowed his Government to target its policies to the various forms of inequality faced by different segments of the population instead of relying on market forces to ensure social welfare.

47. **Mr. Brodjonegoro** (Minister of National Development Planning of Indonesia) said that policies formulated using multidimensional poverty indices should aim to reduce not only absolute poverty but also inequality, or relative poverty, a challenge faced by advanced and emerging economies alike.

48. **Mr. Ravallion** (Professor of Economics at Georgetown University) said that, in the last 10 years, relative poverty, which had traditionally been viewed as a challenge affecting developed countries, had become a more prevalent concern in the developing world. Indeed, the reduction in the incidence of absolute poverty in the world in recent years had been accompanied by an increase in relative poverty.

The meeting was suspended at 4.40 p.m. and resumed at 5.30 p.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*) (E/2017/33, E/2017/64, E/2017/66, E/2017/69 and E/2017/72)

Adoption of the draft ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2017 session of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Council (E/2017/L.29-E/HLPF/2017/L.2)

49. *Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe) took the Chair.*

50. **The President** drew attention to the draft ministerial declaration of the Council's 2017 high-level political forum on the themes "Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges" and "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world" (E/2017/L.29-E/HLPF/2017/L.2). He said that the draft ministerial declaration contained no programme budget implications.

51. The Council should continue the tradition of adopting its draft ministerial declaration by consensus. The draft ministerial declaration before the Council had been drafted with the aim of accommodating the views of all States in a balanced manner; it reflected the Council's assessment of the status of implementation of the 2030 Agenda since the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development. It did not, however, encroach on the primacy of the 2030 Agenda, which remained the foundation of Member States' commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental.

52. In paragraph 23 of the draft ministerial declaration, the number of countries that had conducted voluntary national reviews at the 2017 high-level political forum would be revised to 43, rather than 44, and the corresponding footnote would be updated accordingly.

53. *At the request of the representative of the United States, a recorded vote was taken on paragraph 4 of the draft ministerial declaration.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Ghana, Guyana, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

54. *Paragraph 4 of the draft ministerial declaration was adopted by 30 votes to 2, with 18 abstentions.*

55. **Mr. Amer** (Observer for Israel) said that his country disassociated itself from the consensus regarding the wording of paragraph 4 of the draft ministerial declaration. The politicized language contained in that paragraph did not constitute agreed language and its inclusion in the draft ministerial

declaration should not be interpreted as a tacit agreement to include such language in any future resolutions or documents.

56. *At the request of the representative of the United States, a recorded vote was taken on paragraph 21 of the draft ministerial declaration.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Against:

United States of America.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

57. *Paragraph 21 of the draft ministerial declaration was adopted by 32 votes to 1, with 16 abstentions.*

58. *The draft ministerial declaration, as orally corrected, was adopted.*

59. **Mr. Lawrence** (United States of America) said that the draft ministerial declaration was a non-binding instrument that did not create rights or affect obligations under international law. Paragraph 4 of the draft ministerial declaration contained an unacceptable reference to the right of self-determination of peoples living under foreign occupation. He was disappointed that a common position had not been reached on that paragraph and that certain Member States had once again sought to politicize development issues at the United Nations. With regard to paragraph 21, his delegation did not consider it appropriate for the United Nations to comment on the World Trade Organization and did not support the inclusion of references to that entity in United Nations documents. Furthermore, it was not acceptable for the United Nations to comment on the membership of another international organization, in particular an organization that was not part of the United Nations system.

60. With respect to paragraph 1 of the draft ministerial declaration, the United States recognized the 2030 Agenda as a global framework for sustainable development and acknowledged the central role of the high-level political forum in fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals. His Government could not affirm its support for all aspects of the Agenda, however, as its policies were currently under review. Countries must implement the 2030 Agenda in accordance with their national circumstances and priorities and advance sustainable development in line with the principles contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

61. The United States disassociated itself from the consensus on the portions of paragraph 7 relating to climate change and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. His country recognized that climate change was a complex global challenge and was committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining economic growth and improving energy security. The President of the United States had announced the intention of his Government to withdraw from the Paris Agreement but had indicated openness to re-engaging with the Agreement on terms that were more favourable to the people of the United States. In the meantime, the United States would immediately cease implementation of the commitments outlined in its nationally determined contribution submitted in accordance with article 4 of the Paris Agreement.

62. His country strongly supported the role of disaster risk reduction in minimizing the loss of life and the socioeconomic impact of disasters caused by natural hazards, including geological and hydrometeorological hazards. However, he was disappointed that the issue of trafficking in persons had not been mentioned in the draft ministerial declaration, in particular in paragraph 17 relating to violence and discrimination against women and girls. He was also disappointed that women and girls had not been mentioned earlier in the draft ministerial declaration, as gender equality had been a key focus of the 2017 high-level political forum and was a priority for his Government.

63. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation) welcomed the adoption of the draft ministerial declaration, which reflected the interests of all States in a balanced manner. He noted with appreciation that the draft ministerial declaration was consistent with General Assembly resolution 70/299, in particular regarding a balance between the high-level segment of the Council and the high-level political forum.

64. He was disappointed that the Council had been unable to avoid a vote on specific paragraphs of the

draft ministerial declaration. The Russian Federation supported maintaining and strengthening the role of the Council in ensuring coordination and management of initiatives to implement key international decisions in the economic, social and environmental spheres and related areas. Given the importance of the Council's decisions, his delegation expected that further efforts would be undertaken to develop mutually acceptable solutions in order to achieve consensus on future draft ministerial declarations.

65. **Ms. Engelbrecht Schadtler** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that permanent sovereignty over natural resources was critical for promoting economic and social development, in particular for ensuring equitable distribution of the proceeds of those resources among citizens and for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Her country rejected the illegal plundering of resources that belonged to peoples and countries subject to foreign occupation and colonial domination, in particular the Palestinian people, as such practices were contrary to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. In that connection, her delegation called for the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 1803 (XVII).

66. The application of unilateral coercive measures represented a serious obstacle to development and was at variance with the Charter and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter, contained in General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV). In particular, such measures infringed the principles of the equal rights of States, the right of peoples to self-determination, non-intervention in internal affairs, and the inalienable right of every State to choose its political, economic, social and cultural systems, without interference. As the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had been the target of interventionism and unilateral coercive measures, it called for the termination of such policies, which fell outside the scope of international law and sought to curtail her country's right to self-determination.

67. As the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was not a party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the regulations set out in that instrument, including those that could be considered to constitute customary international law, were not binding on her country except insofar as its legislation explicitly recognized them. Accordingly, her country had reservations about the promotion of the sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. In addition, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterated its previously stated reservations and clarifications regarding its position on specific aspects of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

68. **Mr. Bolaji** (Nigeria) said that the ministerial declaration was a step in the right direction, but that stronger words were needed regarding the issues of illicit financial flows and asset recovery, since they posed increasingly complex challenges to developing countries. More assistance to developing countries, and African countries in particular, was also needed in the area of domestic resource mobilization. Future ministerial declarations should place a focus on issues of development.

69. **Mr. Kato** (Japan) said that throughout the consultation process, his delegation had emphasized the importance of raising awareness, by means of the draft ministerial declaration, of the Sustainable Development Goals and the empowerment of youth. His delegation had not broken the no-objection procedure since it had accepted the draft declaration as a whole. However, some paragraphs of the draft declaration had been found to be unsatisfactory during review, and therefore his delegation had abstained from the vote on paragraph 21. His delegation hoped that Member States could reach consensus on future declarations so as to send a stronger political message.

70. **Ms. Cohen** (Australia) wished to place on record that her delegation had already delivered a statement on behalf of a number of countries (E/2017/SR.46), in which they had registered their concerns about weakened commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment in the draft ministerial declaration at the time of its adoption by the high-level political forum. Furthermore, at that meeting Canada, speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, had explained the position of those countries with regard to their vote on paragraph 21 of the declaration and their concerns that it did not reflect the balanced language of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

71. **Mr. Cadena** (Observer for Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group, guided by the principle of leaving no one behind, had, throughout the process of negotiating the ministerial declaration, provided the co-facilitators with references to principles enshrined in the 2030 Agenda. Those principles had included, in particular, full realization of the right to self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation; the full permanent sovereignty of States over all their wealth, natural resources and economic activity; and the non-promulgation or imposition of any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that were not in

accordance with international law or the Charter of the United Nations and impeded the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries. The Group had also reaffirmed, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the need to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of States.

72. The Group had emphasized the need to maintain a balance among the three dimensions of sustainable development, and had advocated an overall structure for the ministerial declaration regarding the current and future treatment of the Sustainable Development Goals to be reviewed in depth, including with respect to Goal 17; an action-oriented follow-up and review section; and a thorough treatment of the section on means of implementation, as mandated by the relevant General Assembly resolutions. Those issues had been, inter alia, suggestions made by the Group to the co-facilitators during the negotiation process.

73. Unfortunately, however, many of those issues were missing from the ministerial declaration. Furthermore, certain proposals that the Group had presented, including on the basis of agreed language, such as references to harmony with nature, the sharing of wealth, the promotion of sustainable tourism, or welcoming the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), had also not been included in the final text. Conversely, it was surprising that paragraph 40 of the New Urban Agenda, crafted in a different context, had been incorporated as paragraph 8 of the ministerial declaration.

74. Similarly, despite the fact that almost none of the suggestions made by the Group had been considered in the final proposal on paragraph 7 relating to climate change, the Group wished to restate its view that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement adopted under the Convention were the primary international intergovernmental forums for negotiating the global response to climate change. Adequate and predictable public and private financial resources were necessary to support climate action in developing countries, and access to climate finance needed to be increased with a view to fully implementing the Paris Agreement. Those elements had not been reflected in the most recent iteration of the draft ministerial declaration.

75. On the question of means of implementation, fundamental issues that deserved more ample reference in the text had not been included, such as the recognition of the primary responsibility of each country for its own economic and social development; the important role of national policies and development strategies; respect for the policy space of each country and its leadership to implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development; and the need to foster an enabling international economic environment, including coherent and mutually supportive world trade, monetary and financial systems, and strengthened global economic governance. Furthermore, no specific mention had been made of the commitments by providers of official development assistance (ODA) to achieve a national target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to the least developed countries.

76. In referring to the need for a stronger commitment to partnership and cooperation, the Group had also suggested including recognition that the current global trajectory would not lead to the achievement of the goal of eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions by 2030. That recognition, as well as the mention of concrete actions including wide consultations and joint contributions for shared benefits, had not been included in the text.

77. Finally, in order to pursue the objective of an "action-oriented" follow-up and review session, the Group had also suggested several ideas aimed at assisting States to close gaps in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including, inter alia, through the development of capacities in policy formulation and in the implementation of global outcomes. Those elements had also been omitted from the final version of the document.

78. It was important to highlight the fundamental role performed by the co-facilitators and their respective staff members as well as their professionalism throughout a long and exacting negotiation process, in which there had been some degree of inflexibility by some negotiating partners. The co-facilitators and staff had made their best efforts to reach consensus while delivering a succinct yet relevant ministerial declaration.

79. The compromise text circulated by the co-facilitators on 10 July 2017 had fallen short of the expectations of the Group. However, in a demonstration of its flexibility, the Group had committed itself to the proposal, convinced of the historic relevance of the 2030 Agenda and the perpetual value of multilateralism in addressing global challenges. The Group appreciated the decision by the majority of States to join the consensus on the text, and expressed its major disappointment at the decision of

one Member State to call a vote on certain topics that were particularly relevant to the Group.

80. The Group adamantly supported the removal of obstacles to the full realization of the right to self-determination of countries and peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation. It was undeniable that people suffering under such conditions would be left behind, and would not achieve sustainable development, as long as they continued to face those obstacles.

81. The Group fully supported meaningful trade liberalization and a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization. Trade could function as a powerful tool to address inequalities within and among countries and promote sustainable development, especially in developing countries. In conclusion, the Group welcomed the adoption of the ministerial declaration and noted that it would serve as a model for future agreements.

82. **Mr. Zahir** (Observer for the Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that although a single text could not represent equally the priorities of all countries, the final draft ministerial declaration submitted by the co-facilitators for consideration had provided room for consensus. The small island developing States had demonstrated dedication and flexibility throughout the negotiation process, truly reflecting the great value that those States placed in the high-level political forum. The forum was the only venue available to small island developing States for reviewing their implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. The realization of the 2030 Agenda could not be achieved without a collective international effort that was inclusive of all. It was critical to respect the process and continue to review and implement the ambitious Agenda. While there was a need to prioritize goals nationally, it was important to take a holistic approach on a global scale to achieve progress. The year 2030 would arrive whether the world was ready for it or not, and the international community, as the authors of the 2030 Agenda, had an obligation to fulfil commitments, deliver results and leave no one behind.

83. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea** (Observer for Mexico) said that, while Mexico welcomed the adoption of the draft ministerial declaration, it regretted the absence of substantive paragraphs on the human rights of women and girls, particularly as Sustainable Development Goal 5 had been one of the Goals under review at the 2017 high-level political forum. Rather than focusing on a specific set of Goals each year, the Council should review all the Goals on an ongoing basis. He hoped that a more effective approach would be developed by the end of the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycle after progress had been made in reforming the United Nations development system. His delegation supported the adoption of paragraph 21 of the draft ministerial declaration, which set out the foundational principles underpinning international commerce and the work of the World Trade Organization, and was concerned that some delegations questioned those principles. Mexico also supported the universalization of the Paris Agreement.

84. Member States must work to strengthen the role of the high-level political forum in monitoring and reviewing the 2030 Agenda and to ensure its alignment with the work of the Council and the General Assembly. While his delegation valued the independence of the group of 15 scientists that had been appointed to draft the Global Sustainable Development Report, it did not understand why a meeting of the group had been convened in Long Island, New York, away from United Nations Headquarters, during the first two days of the high-level political forum, when members of that group could have benefited from attending the meetings of the forum, in particular the presentations of voluntary national reviews. Keeping the group on the sidelines of Member States' discussions would not allow it to draft a comprehensive report that reflected the efforts undertaken by States and contained reality-based recommendations for the follow-up process. At the high-level political forum, the Global Sustainable Development Report must be presented in a transparent manner and should be linked with the presentation of the Sustainable Development Goals progress report in order to provide States with detailed information on the evaluation process and the matters under examination. Above all, the Global Sustainable Development Report must be based on the real situations faced and outcomes achieved by Member States. He looked forward to learning more about the progress made by the group and the methodology that it planned to use for its comprehensive evaluation.

85. The effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda would require increased mobilization of, inter alia, international public financing for development, including ODA and other types of concessional financing, as well as strengthened South-South and triangular cooperation. Closer cooperation with the private sector should also be encouraged in order to promote the development of blended finance tools. In

addition, his delegation called on international financial institutions to continue their dialogue on development in transition in order to develop concrete initiatives to support the graduation of developing countries through a phased process.

86. The high-level political forum should incorporate a more in-depth focus on the topics of conflict prevention and sustainable peace, as such a focus would lend coherence to the Organization's policies under its three pillars and under the three dimensions of sustainable development. Indeed, the concept of sustainable peace was indispensable to international discussions on development, given its critical role in maintaining development gains and accelerating progress towards implementing the 2030 Agenda. Lastly, his delegation welcomed the participation of a broad range of stakeholders in the high-level political forum, which attested to the critical role of the 2030 Agenda as an action plan for achieving more prosperous, equitable and sustainable societies.

87. **Ms. Giungi** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the negotiated ministerial declaration was an important result of the high-level segment and a balanced expression of the efforts of delegations to reach compromise. However, her delegation wished to place on record two reservations. First, that the Holy See did not consider access to sexual and reproductive health-care services to encompass access to abortion or abortifacients. Second, that the Holy See regarded gender to be grounded in biological sexual identity and difference, and not in a psychological state, nor to be interpreted as a social construct.

88. **Ms. Nguyen** Thi Van Dong (Viet Nam) said that paragraph 8 of the ministerial declaration contained concepts that had not been fully clarified. The commitments contained in that paragraph needed to be fulfilled in accordance with national legislation, and, as stated in paragraph 1, it was important to take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development.

89. **Mr. Zarie Zare** (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the follow-up to development objectives, including the Sustainable Development Goals, would be conducted in his country in accordance with its national laws, development priorities and religious, social and cultural values.

90. **The President** invited the Council to take note of the World Economic and Social Survey 2017: Reflecting on seventy years of development policy analysis (E/2017/50); the note by the Secretary-General entitled "Progress report on the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns" (E/2017/63); the report of the Secretary-General on eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges (E/2017/64); the World economic situation and prospects as of mid-2017 (E/2017/65); the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2017/66); and the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Beyond gross domestic product: multidimensional poverty and the Sustainable Development Goals" (E/2017/69).

91. *It was so decided.*

Closing of the segment

92. **Mr. Wu** Hongbo (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the high-level segment had offered several key messages for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. First, eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, particularly extreme poverty, remained the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Second, the 2030 Agenda, together with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, provided a comprehensive framework for eradicating poverty. Third, policy integration across the three dimensions of sustainable development had become the standard, and there was an immense need to integrate actions towards eradicating poverty. Finally, an inclusive follow-up and review was fundamental. During the high-level segment, far-reaching discussions had pointed to tremendous capacity gaps and challenges such as data collection and data disaggregation, but also to new opportunities. The segment had also highlighted the need to strengthen the qualitative dimension of multilayered follow-up and review. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as the secretariat for the high-level political forum, the Council and many of the functional commissions and expert bodies, would continue to provide integrated support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

93. **The President** said that consideration of the main theme, "Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges", had made a significant contribution towards raising awareness of those issues and galvanizing efforts to eradicate poverty, the greatest global challenge. The high-level segment represented the culmination of the work undertaken by the entire Economic and Social Council system to provide integrated policy recommendations, address

gaps and contribute to the overall review of progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

94. The 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda had demonstrated the consensus on joint action to be taken to advance the well-being of humanity and the planet. An enabling environment in the form of international institutional frameworks and actions could be decisive for national poverty eradication strategies, but globalization was presenting significant challenges. A change in mindset was necessary, as the implementation of the Agenda required putting people and sustainability at the centre of policymaking while also mobilizing significant amounts of resources.

95. The high-level segment had also included the ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum, whose discussion had highlighted that efforts were ongoing and that new ways of thinking and working would be needed by all development stakeholders in order to implement the 2030 Agenda. The forum's theme of eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world had been thoroughly addressed by means of 43 national voluntary presentations and other high-level and dynamic discussions, as well as a large number of side events. The adoption of the ministerial declaration reaffirmed the commitment to the 2030 Agenda, and it was encouraging to see that the synergy between the forum and the Council was increasing the momentum towards the implementation of the Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.